

Fighting smoke with fire & satire

SMOKING, FROM 1C

their late 30s and early 40s.

Until former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and now Secretary of Health Louis Sullivan spoke out in no uncertain terms about the deceptive nature of cigarette advertising, elected officials, government bureaucrats, medical school researchers and the media alike were fearful of confronting the real source of the smoking pandemic: the wealthy and influential tobacco industry.

Now all unite in outrage over the targeting of women and minorities in tobacco advertising, and the use of sports to promote cigarettes, as if these practices have only recently begun. Yet it is illusory to believe that there exists in this country a major mass media effort designed to engage young people in a true understanding of the devastating economic and physical toll taken by tobacco use. To any adolescent who reads Sports Illustrated, Rolling Stone, SPIN, Playboy, National Lampoon or Mademoiselle, the presence of cigarette advertising clearly suggests that smoking is associated with good looks, sexiness, success and athletic ability. But bad health or even bad breath? Not on your life.

Teachers and health professionals alike have long expressed frustration over their inability to cut teenage tobacco use. Generic lectures and warnings about the dangers of smoking simply cannot compete with the allure of imagery for Marlboro, Camel and other popular adolescent brands that meet teen-agers' needs for autonomy and social acceptance.

The tobacco industry has also been adept at exploiting racial identity in defining a profitable market among ethnic minorities. In addition to their constant presence on the news, sports, fashion and lifestyle pages of newspapers in the black community, tobacco companies are their leading advertisers. As part of a salute to Black History Month in February, R.J. Reynolds and Philip Morris featured discount coupons in Ebony and other magazines for various brands of cigarettes, complete with pictures of famous black scientists such as George Washington Carver.

Indeed, seldom has a tobacco advertisement or company asked us to smoke. Instead, they invite us to

join them at a party or sports events — such as last month's Marlboro Soccer Cup and the Camel GT of the Grand Prix auto race in Miami, and Virginia Slims of Florida, a tobacco-sponsored tennis tournament featuring a 13-year-old girl's professional debut. Often such sporting events benefit local hospitals. Truth may be good, but juxtaposition is better.

To appreciate the importance of funding a counter-advertising campaign such as Sen. Kennedy has proposed, it is necessary to recall how cigarette advertising has changed its face over the years.

In 1967 a recent law school graduate named John Banzhaf became upset that cigarette advertising continued to appear on television as if the findings of the surgeon general's report was yesterday's news. He petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a fair opportunity for the other side of smoking to be told. The FCC agreed, a decision that led the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and other organizations to produce commercials to counteract smoking.

These counter-advertisements, such as one featuring actor William Talman (the district attorney on TV's *Perry Mason* who was dying from lung cancer at the time he made the commercial), were quite successful in slowing the rise in cigarette sales among young people. So successful, in fact, that in 1969 the tobacco companies asked Congress, in exchange for an antitrust exemption, to remove their own advertisements from television and radio.

But when Congress went along with this request, counter-advertising also dropped out of sight. Once off the air, cigarette companies became the top advertisers in most major magazines and stepped up their sponsorships of entertainment and sporting events. This method got cigarettes back on television with some decided advantages over controversial advertising: It was less expensive, for one thing, and it was more effective. Most important, with counter-advertisements effectively out of sight, the sales of cigarettes resumed an upward course.

In 1977, as a family physician in training at Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital and with the encouragement of Dade County Medical Examiner Joe Davis, I founded Doctors Ought to Care with the idea of



EMPHYSEMA SLIMS: Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan displays a T-shirt spoofing the Virginia Slims pro tennis circuit as the Medical Society of the District of Columbia held an anti-smoking protest last month.

bringing back and expanding upon the very positive health values successfully promoted in the 1967-69 counter-advertising campaign.

Unable to purchase billboard space in Miami because of the billboard companies' refusal to permit us to compete side-by-side with cigarette advertisers, I called Jack Waxenberg at the Bus Bench Co. in Hialeah. Waxenberg was delighted to sell DOC space for our messages.

Opposite a huge downtown billboard that said, "Come to Marlboro Country," we put up a bench that said, "Country Fresh Arsenic." When one brand called Decade advertised itself as "the taste that took 10 years to make," DOC responded with "Emphysema — the disease that took a decade to make."

DOC also began to create various counter-events to call attention to tobacco-sponsored promotions. The Benson and Heart Attack Film Festival, The Not Smoking Is Cool Jazz Festival, the Barboro Country Music Show and the Emphysema Slims Tennis Tournament are all actual events created by DOC chapters across the country. The first national Emphysema Slims Tennis Tournament and tennis clinic for kids last year in Santa Fe, N.M., attracted three Olympic gold medal winners, numerous entertainment figures and tennis stars.

DOC has also ventured into sports sponsorship on a larger scale. When DOC learned in 1988 that the U.S. Boomerang Team was about to depart for a major international competition and was sponsored by a cigarette company, DOC offered itself as a substitute sponsor. Under its sponsorship, the team won while wearing the international no-smoking logo.

It is DOC's hope to inspire other health organizations to counteract the influence of tobacco promotions by sponsoring local and national sports teams with a "Just Say No to Marlboro and Camel theme." (Camel and Marlboro are the top-selling brands among American teen-agers.) In addition, DOC plans to ask the U.S. attorney general to enforce the law against televised tobacco advertising, now aired in the form of tobacco-sponsored sporting events.

At countless school assemblies, classroom lectures and Superhealth conferences, DOC members have developed counter-advertising strategies to support DOC's motto of "laughing the pushers out of town." Since most, if not all, new tobacco users come from the 8- to 18-year-old age group, who could doubt that the tobacco industry has not carefully researched this market? Peer pressure can be bought, signed, sealed and delivered on Madison Avenue.

Despite an advertising blitzkrieg

second to none, the tobacco and advertising industries would have the public believe that adolescents have heard the facts about "both sides" and now have a "free choice" to decide whether or not to smoke "when they grow up." In claiming that it does not approve of young people smoking, the tobacco industry offers peer pressure, parental smoking and "a climate of general rebelliousness among teen-agers" as the reasons for adolescents taking up this neglected cornerstone of drug abuse.

Meanwhile, the tobacco industry runs a year-round campaign with virtually no planned exposure for opposing messages (\$3 billion annually versus less than \$4 million in government public service announcements, pamphlets and posters) in newspapers, magazines, supermarkets and television. Every child grows up seeing thousands of larger-than-life billboards for cigarettes and countless sports-associated tobacco promotions.

Classroom-based education with an emphasis on the physical effects of smoking is only one, limited way to tackle the adolescent smoking pandemic. Cigarette advertising and promotions can keep up with the latest fads in its portrayal of smoking so as to remain "in" far better than even the most talented and motivated teachers and parents. Counter-advertising helps to educate young people not only about the preventable factors responsible for bad health and high medical costs but also about the insidiousness of the outright promotion of those factors.

There are precedents for government expenditures on public-interest advertising, such as the current military recruitment promotions during television sporting events. In the case of smoking, purchase of advertising space is especially essential. Unlike the heavily publicized Media-Advertising Partnership of a Drug-Free America, which has received millions of dollars in donated space in the print media and free air time on television and radio, media corporations are too covetous of tobacco industry advertising revenue to run free advertising to discourage the sale of cigarettes.

Perhaps it is time for a private Citizens Partnership for a Tobacco-Free Media. In the meantime, paid counter-advertising such as Sen. Kennedy has proposed will go a long way toward laughing the pushers out of town.

The great lesson for cutting-edge art

IRON HORSE, FROM 1C

ers, loved not even by pigeons.

And who lately hasn't pondered the controversies swirling about contemporary public art, most recently Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photography and Andres Serrano's notorious crucifix in urine. These works aroused political pique and public outrage, culminating in so many letters to the editor and rewriting of the rules governing grants from the National Endowment of the Arts.

But out there in the middle of a Georgia corn field, halfway between Watkinsville and Greensboro, is art that 36 years ago stirred folks, not to dismayed conversation over white wine, but to absolutely run amok.

It stood there, the evening sun low enough to shine through its metal ribs, this once unnerving abstraction. In 1990, it was hardly an abstraction at all. It looked, unmistakably, like a horse. A waving mane and tail, ribs curving around a great chest, mouth agape. It was a tall, proud, beautiful horse.

In any public park today, anywhere, even in Nebraska, this horse would hardly provoke more than admiration or shrugs. Maybe the lesson here is that today's controversies will too evolve into a mere shrug.

In 1954, however, Abbott Pattison's iron horse was like nothing ever seen in the area. "At the time, this was the cutting edge of sculpture, very *avant garde*," said Robert Nix, who now teaches art at the University of Georgia. In the spring of '54, Nix was a graduate student at the Athens, Ga., school.

Pattison, a Chicago sculptor, had shaped and welded the horse together that winter in the bowels of the art department. When it was finished, the university apparently made one massive strategic error when it picked a location for the horse. It was trucked over to the lawn next to the athletic dormitory.

The great lesson for cutting-edge art in America is to keep it out of sight of Jesse Helms and far, far away from the football team.

Jack Curtis was a geography student at Georgia at the time of the unveiling. It was more timing, he insisted, than student malevolence toward modern art. It was spring, students were restless. "We hadn't had a pantie raid in two years."

Students didn't know what to make of it. Someone brought hay from the agricultural school and stuffed it in the horse's mouth. Someone else placed a pile of manure at the rear.

Mary McCutchen and her husband Earl, both art professors, drove over that evening to see the new horse. They saw a growing crowd of students. "They just all went kind of crazy."

As the evening went on, the mob, led by the football meatheads, grew wilder, more destructive. The students built a bonfire beneath the horse, using old automobile tires as fuel. They beat its sturdy frame with clubs. They threw paint on it.

Still-bitter members of the art department say university officials watched the mob, making no effort to intervene. The mob refused to move away. Finally, firemen turned hoses on the students.

Pattison saw the battered horse the next day and was stunned. He said he suddenly understood how well-meaning people succumbed to the mob mentality, how these friendly Southerners could staff a lynch mob.



FRED GRIMM / Miami Herald

IRON HORSE: Janet Bradford, a University of Georgia graduate, sits atop the old sculpture.

The university's solution was capitulation. The horse was loaded up on a truck and driven away to a secret location. It was kept hidden for five years.

Jack Rice, whose father taught at the agriculture department, said he came home from the Navy in 1959 and asked about the iron horse. He suggested to his father that maybe they could put it out on their farm, 20 miles south of the university.

Rice isn't sure who technically owns the horse. "But it has been here for 30 years and we love it. We'd put up a squawk if someone tried to move it."

Rice said the farm is a better place for the horse, that out here, people passing by can see it in contrast to the pastoral setting.

Lamar Dodd, one of the state's best-known painters, retired now from the university's art department, said he has come to think that, despite the awful controversy that sent the horse into exile, the rural, muddy field is the best place for the iron horse.

"He looks proper out there," Dodd said. "He stands out there looking over that field wondering what the world is coming to."

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2 Live Crew's rap lyrics celebrate inhumanity

FIEDLER, FROM 1C

our rap-less worlds? I hope not.

After reading the lyrics of the group's smash-hit album (more than 1.2 million sold before the controversy; doubtless hundreds of thousands more sold since) with its featured singles, *Me So Horny* and *Bad Ass Bitch* and others whose titles can't be printed, I am left with the uneasy feeling that, while Martinez's approach may have been incorrect, his instincts weren't.

There is something seriously amiss in this music; it just wasn't where Martinez was looking.

The group's leader, Luther Campbell, asserts that the music is "meant to be fun." It isn't. At least not in the context of today's black America.

He also calls it "an underground sound, taken straight off the street." That's undoubtedly true. And it's out on the street where it lies the problem.

The lyrics — and I use that term loosely here — are not benign. We're not talking about *Louie-Louie*.

Virtually every line in every song (and that term is also used loosely) on this album celebrates sickness, perversion, male inhumanity toward females. It is not about sexual love; it is about animal lust in which the more powerful male subjugates the submissive woman with no responsibility other than to achieve pleasure, even by inflicting pain.

There is a great irony here. When Martinez touched off this controversy, we in the media rose in unison to condemn (and ridicule) what we saw as the heavy hand of government muffling free expression. Now, having won that argument, we find ourselves tacitly aligned with 2 Live Crew.

I agree that we don't want to be on the side of censorship, at least now when steps appear to be taken to keep this material out of the hands of children.

But I also don't believe that we want to be on the side of this music, where we now appear to be. To defend someone's right to free speech and expression does not mean that we cannot at the same time condemn that expression. In fact, I think it carries with it the obligation that we do so when we see that other harm can result.

I think that's the case here.

Virtually every line in every song (and that term is also used loosely) on this album celebrates sickness, perversion, male inhumanity toward females.

If the lyrics of these songs could somehow be recast so that the objects were not women, but rather were Jews or Asians or gays or other minorities who feel the sting of prejudice, the community — liberals and the media included — would have risen in unison to condemn them.

I don't think the parallel is overdrawn. The first step on the road to genocide came when Nazi Germany sought to dehumanize Jews, to make them objects, not persons.

In that same way, lyrics such as these depict the participants in sexual relationships as subhuman, driven by lust and degradation untempered by responsibility or caring.

And what is horrifying here is that this music is apparently flourishing and resonating among a significant population of mostly young, black males. They not only listen to it, they apparently identify with it.

Think for a moment what that signals to the rest of us. It says that at least 1.2 million of these youths support, if only in their fantasies, the concept of women as empty sex objects and of sexual acts carrying no accountability.

These songs certify and celebrate that view. And that goes to the core of what some consider the most serious problem in the black community today — teenage boys impregnating teen-age girls with no thought about the responsibilities of fatherhood.

And where does this pleasure-without-responsibility lead?

To drug use in some cases. To crimes against the more vulnerable. To thrill killings. If a frightening number of young black boys finds meaning in 2 Live Crew's songs, is it any wonder that we learned last week that one in four black males aged 20 to 29 is either in jail or on probation?

The common thread here is the disregard of other human beings.

Don't get me wrong. By focusing on 2 Live Crew I'm not oblivious to the equally animalistic violence in the lyrics of some heavy-metal music (as Tipper Gore has shown). And I'm certainly not suggesting a cause-and-effect relationship between listening to these rap songs and falling into a life of depravity.

Rather, I believe that what the popularity of these songs demonstrates is that the process of looking at others as objects, of dehumanization, is already under way in the teen years. And that is a truly frightening prospect.

The solution to this problem goes far beyond censoring records. It requires changing attitudes, imbuing young people with a sense of worth, their own and that of others.

How to achieve this is the more difficult question. We should be concerned that until Bob Martinez charged off half-cocked, nobody with an ear to the ground in the black community was sufficiently alarmed by the music to at least begin a debate about what is at stake. Somehow, our religious, political and educational leaders have to reconnect with this segment of American youth in a way that matches the appeal of 2 Live Crew.

But rather than attempting to stifle expression, these leaders clearly and urgently need to cultivate a sense of caring among youths, caring for themselves and for others.

Jesse Jackson has perhaps set the example by urging youthful audiences to join him in the chant, "I am somebody . . ." That message must be spread in every way because people who are somebody don't treat others like nobodies (or nothings).

This isn't an easy task, but we don't begin by pooh-poohing Martinez and then going about business as usual. This music sounds an alarm and someone had better respond.

The ideal solution here would be to find leadership emerging from a group that already has credibility with these youths.

I'll bet 2 Live Crew could work Jackson's theme into a rap album. He might even join them on it.

Call it, *As Respected as They Wanna Be*, with the hit single, *Me So Worthy*.

It would be fun.